

FCAAC-Foster Care and Adoption Agencies of Colorado Prospective Foster Parent “FAQ’s”

How do I choose which agency to go with? There are many licensed child placement agencies in the State of Colorado, in addition to county department of human service agencies who all license families to do foster care. Child placement agencies tend to be smaller and typically non profit agencies. Of these child placement agencies, you will find there are more similarities than differences. All agencies are governed by the same State rules. Therefore, many areas, such as licensing, will be very similar. The differences will be in the personalities of staff, how quickly staff respond to your phone calls, whether or not the agency has a specialty (i.e. special-needs children, foster-adopt, teenagers), what services they provide, whether or not the agency charges anything for the application process, and so on.

What types of foster parents do you license? Most child placement agencies license many different types of foster homes. These homes are located in urban, suburban and rural settings, and they span the ethnic, cultural and racial spectrum.

What is required to become licensed? First, you must be over the age of 21, with reliable transportation and extra room in your home. Next, you must complete an application and fingerprint card. After you turn these in, we can get started on your background checks: Central Registry (In and Out-Of-State), Federal Bureau of Investigation and a County Records check. Then, you will begin working on your CPR/First Aid certification and other training. CORE (12 hours) training is the required training to become a foster parent-this is typically provided by each agency. In addition, copies of documents such as your pet records (vaccinations), physicals for every member of the household, three references for each applicant, and copies of driver's licenses and automobile insurance are all necessary. When we have received all of these items, and you have successfully passed your background checks, we will complete the SAFE home study and home inspection.

What types of children are placed into foster homes licensed? Ask each agency to find out what types, ages of children they work with. Most work with all types of children: Boys and girls, from birth to eighteen years old, who may have emotional and/or behavioral disorders, substance abuse issues, delinquent behaviors, special education needs, histories of abuse and neglect, and so on. Some children may need respite (short-term), care until a relative is available, long-term care, or adoption! Some agencies may be licensed to do adoption, some may not. Most agencies will take referrals from all county departments of human service agencies in Colorado.

Will I be told everything about the child when he/she is placed with me? Yes, you will be told everything that we are told. Please keep in mind that many times children are going to be brand-new to the system, and if their parents were suddenly taken to jail, for example, many details about the child are going to be unknown. It will be your job, as their first foster parent, to pay close attention to the behaviors of the child during the first few weeks. You might end up knowing more than the caseworker. On the other hand, we will know more information about children who have been in placement for an extended period of time but need to be moved. You will have access to all of the information that we have in our records.

How long are children typically placed with me? It is so hard to say. Each child coming into the system is coming from a unique situation. The child may stay one day until a parent is able to care for them or may stay years until he/she is adopted. Typically, children stay in care less than twelve months, because the goal is to find these children permanency.

Am I able to specify the age group I want? Yes, foster parents are definitely able to specify what ages and types of children they think they will be able to maintain in their home. In general, there is a higher need for homes willing to take in teenagers and sibling groups; however, there is always a need for foster parents to fit various niches. Adoptive homes are always needed as well.

How many children can I have? You are allowed, by State regulations, to have up to four foster children placed into your home, or a maximum of eight children (combination of biological, adopted and foster). If a sibling group of more than four is referred, and you have room, this is also allowed. You will tell us the number of children you are comfortable with, and we will accommodate you, within the limits of the State regulations and the space you have available in your home.

Will the child placed into my home attend my local, neighborhood school? In some cases, yes, and, in some cases, you may be asked to transport to the child's home school. If the caseworker is unsure how long the child will be in placement, s/he may ask you to transport on a temporary basis. Unfortunately, there is no extra reimbursement for transportation costs.

Are foster parents paid? Your foster care reimbursement is determined by the child's level. His/her level is based on the amount of transportation needed, level of behavioral management needed, amount of education intervention needed, and so on.

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How do you support your foster parents? This is a great question to ask any child placement agency you are interested in. Most will have 24-hour emergency cell phone coverage for crisis situations. Most agencies will also provide ongoing training opportunities and/or a training resource library. Many will host foster parent support groups and will also organize social events for foster families, such as holiday parties and summer barbeques.

What interaction will I have with biological parents? This will depend on your child's situation. You will most likely see the parents when you drop the children off at the visitation center for visits, but you may be asked to facilitate phone calls with the parents at times, as well. When a child is placed into your home, the caseworker will discuss visitation with you and make sure you feel comfortable with anything being asked of you.

Our family attends church -- is it okay to take my foster child along? Yes, as long as the child and his/her family are comfortable with this. Most times, children love to go to church with foster families. However, there may be times when a parent or the child has a strong preference about which denomination of church he/she attends or a preference to not attend church at all. It is during times like this that a foster family needs to be prepared to make arrangements for a child to stay home from church or to be transported to a specific type of church. It is a State regulation that foster parents give children the freedom to choose to participate in religion.

I am a single parent -- am I still eligible to become a foster parent? Yes, of course! We have many types of parents and each is unique in their own way. Even if you have never had children of your own, we still believe that you have great potential to do foster care. It is preferred that you have a support person (ie. neighbor, friend, family member) who will be able to help you out if there is an emergency situation or if you need child care.

I am a working parent -- what do I do about daycare? The County does not pay extra for daycare, so if you choose to put a foster child in daycare, the County will not pay for it. However, you may deduct this cost from the amount you are given for foster care reimbursement. Considering a family member as a daycare provider is also an option. To keep your children for over six hours at a time, the individual will have to complete background checks and do some training as well. The caseworker for your child may have strong feelings about your child being or not being in daycare. If daycare is something you will need to resort to on a full-time basis, please let your agency know upon licensure.

Do agencies offer any "perks"? Many agencies offer their foster parent food bank access and/or have clothing banks, donations of car seats, etc which can help with child care. Ask each agency how they can support you.

Can I be dual-licensed? Can I care for DD adults in my home while I do foster care and/or be a licensed home daycare provider and also do foster care? No, unfortunately, rules will not allow for adult DD clients and foster children to be living in the same home. In addition, each agency will have different policies on whether or not they will allow dual licenses for people interested in both daycare and foster care.

How do I get started? Contact the agency you are interested in becoming licensed with (you may only pick one!) and ask them to send you an application packet!